

Sample information letter and consent form.

Title of Project: Preference Judgements for Conversational Assistance.

This study is conducted by Dr. Charles L.A. Clarke and Sasha Vtyurina, a PhD student, at the School of Computer Science of the University of Waterloo, Canada.

The objective of the study is to improve machine learning algorithms for answer selection for conversational assistants such as Amazon Alexa, Siri, etc.

Study details:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to select the best answer to a given question using a web interface. When you start a HIT, you will be shown a question and two candidate answers to this question. Your goal is to:

1. Click on the answer that answers the question better.
2. If both answers are similar, select the one with the least extraneous information.
3. If both answers are similar, select the one with the best formatting (typos, punctuation, etc.)

Each HIT contains 12 questions and takes around 5 minutes to complete. After completing all questions, you will be taken to a page with a confirmation code. Use this code to complete the HIT on the Amazon Mechanical Turk platform.

Remuneration: For the participation in the study you will be paid \$1.5 per HIT. You may choose to withdraw from the task at any point by clicking the “Exit task” button in the top right corner of the screen. “Exit task” button will take you to the screen with MTurk code. You will get remunerated ¢10 for starting the HIT, ¢10 for each completed search task, and ¢20 for finishing the entire HIT.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria: We seek participants who are proficient in English.

Withdrawal: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to interact with the interface or decline to answer any questions in the questionnaire at any time you want. If after finishing the task you wish to withdraw the data you have provided, you can do so by contacting Charles L.A. Clarke at claclark@gmail.com or Sasha Vtyurina at sasha.vtyurina@uwaterloo.ca

Benefits: There are no direct anticipated or known benefits to you as a result of this study. This study will contribute to the development of machine learning models for answer selection in conversational systems such as Amazon Alexa, Siri, etc.

Risks: We do not anticipate any risks from participation in this study.

Confidentiality: It is important for you to know that any information that you provide will be confidential. Over the course of the experiment we will be recording the answers you select as the best ones for each question. We will release the labels we collect from the study for the use in future research. No identifiable information or worker IDs will be released. The data files will be stored under a numerical identifier. The data collected from this study will be maintained on a password-protected computer database in a restricted access area of the university and external servers. As well, the data will be electronically archived after completion of the study and maintained for 8 years and then erased. The data collected for this study will be kept at the University of Waterloo. Only researchers associated with the study will have access to the data.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#XXXX). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

Questions: Should you have any questions about the study, please contact Charles L.A. Clarke (claclark@gmail.com) or Sasha Vtyurina (sasha.vtyurina@uwaterloo.ca). Further, if you would like to receive a copy of the results of this study, please contact either investigator.

Consent for Participation

By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

[YES / NO] Clickable buttons

